

Master of Public Health student using federal stipend to support field experience



Wednesday, January 4, 2017. MANHATTAN — Alyssa Toillion, **Auburn**, a Master of Public Health student at Kansas State University, is the recipient of a \$1,500 stipend through the Midwestern Public Health Training Center to support her field placement project for her degree.

The Midwestern Public Health Training Center, Iowa City, Iowa, is one of 10 regional public health training centers funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The center annually selects five student recipients each in Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska for the stipends.

"My field experience consists of creating species-specific brochures and PowerPoint slide sets for all those involved with treating and/or managing food producing animals, including veterinarians who need informative resources to educate their clients about best prevention practices," Toillion said.

"The stipend from the Midwestern Public Health Training Center is an excellent opportunity that will both help fund Alyssa's field experience and highlight public health projects conducted by Master of Public Health students at Kansas State University," said

Ellyn Mulcahy, director of the Master of Public Health program, which has four areas of emphasis: food safety and biosecurity; public health nutrition; public health physical activity; and infectious diseases/zoonoses, the latter of which is Toillion's chosen area of emphasis.

All Master of Public Health degree candidates are required to complete a field experience at an off-campus, non-academic, public health practice organization. The purposes of a field experience are to provide a bridge between professional academic preparation and public health practice; allow the student to apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills learned in the core public health courses and the area of emphasis courses in an agency setting under the supervision and guidance of a mentor-preceptor who has significant public health training and/or experience.

Toillion's preceptor for the project is Tarrie Crnic, a 2006 Kansas State University Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Master of Public Health alumna who now works for the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

"For my project, in addition to the brochures and PowerPoint slide sets, I will develop online training modules," Toillion said. "To do that, I'll be interviewing experts in different disciplines, including beef, dairy, swine, poultry, small ruminants and exhibition animals. The first focus will be on-farm drug residue avoidance and cover strategies producers can use to prevent drug residues on their operation. The second focus will be the regulatory aspect of drug residues. This will entail contact with the FDA to learn the regulatory process on how drugs get approved, the testing process and how violative residue investigations are conducted."

To qualify for the stipend, students are expected to fulfill a specific set of requirements.

"I'll be asked to fill out a few evaluations, and write two to three blog posts for the Midwestern Public Health Training Center," Toillion said. "I will also have a final report to submit, outlining the extent of my project, and an abstract for the 2017 Kansas Public Health Association conference Oct. 10-11."

In addition to being a public health student, Toillion works in the College of Veterinary Medicine as an assistant project coordinator for the Beef Cattle Institute. Her responsibilities there have been involved in video editing and production for online training modules, which are skills she will apply to her Master of Public Health field experience project.

Toillion said she plans to present her master's report and finish her degree this summer. From there she would like to pursue a career in veterinary epidemiology.